USACE Virtual Library
Concept for Evaluation, Planning and Implementation

US Army Corps of Engineers

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The world of USACE Libraries and librarians is changing rapidly. Forces behind the changes include: advances in information technology, the overwhelming volume of information available, the rising cost of information, budgetary cutbacks, manpower reductions, and the service expectations of library customers. Paralleling all these changes is the fact that the Corps of Engineers has turned to automation to organize, store, access, retrieve, and disseminate information and the expectations of library customers demands that their libraries be more than custodians of print material and micro fiche. The expectation is that our libraries must move to electronic information platforms with real time interactive resources. Furthermore, the National performance Review, USACE Vision, and CORPSPLUS Master Strategy with its goals of revolutionizing effectiveness, seeking growth opportunities, and investing in people offer the USACE Library Program an opportunity to reassess its basic approach to business and its role within the Corps of Engineers. Therefore, we are proposing a paradigm change for the USACE Library Program, one in which we will look to a virtual environment to reshape the way we do business. We are also recommending some changes in our business processes to help us become a more effective and efficient service organization.

Virtual Library Objectives include:

★ Establish metrics from customer survey.
★ Coordinate and standardize information resources across Corps
★ Shift from a "Pull" to a "Push" Information Service.
★ Improve access to information by extending library to desktop 24 hours/day 7days/week.
★ Use better business processes (e.g., volume discounts for materials and services)
★ Establish an Information Center for each Division with library staffing and collections
★ Consolidate libraries located close together
★ Increase cost effectiveness
★ Reduce Operating Costs
★ Proactive Partner

Today's Situation:

What We Do:
As a service organization to the engineers and scientists of the Corps, our Program is dedicated to retrieving and disseminating information, as well as providing access to information resources and services. Our libraries provide a vast array of information services to include:

★ Information search and retrieval from online database within the local organization.
★ Access to world wide information networks and resources.
★ Timely reference services as well as in-depth research assistance.
★ Awareness/alert services; e.g., delivering electronic tables of contents for specific journals.
★ Physical or electronic documents to users from the library collection or the world outside.

★ Collection control (cataloging and indexing of materials).
★ Corporate online card cataloging through the Corps of Engineers Library Information Online (CELIO) Internet website.
★ Analysis of user needs and development of policies.
★ Selection and acquisition of materials (CD-ROMs, video/audio tapes, print media, and microforms).
★ Repository for all USACE technical reports. In this respect the libraries are the guardians of the Corps' legacy.

Value of Libraries:
Corps of Engineers is a multi-disciplinary force with expanded roles and increasingly complex mission. With this growing diversity comes the driving need for concise, relevant, and timely information to address intricate issues — (and help solve problems). The efficient transfer of information from source to user rests in the hands of the professional librarians. Studies support the fact that the primary customers (construction program staff, engineers, scientists) are from within Districts and that libraries help them achieve their goals by increasing their productivity and helping them perform work with greater quality and speed.

Our Future:
 In our desire to become a more effective and efficient organization, the USACE Library Program is proposing that a virtual library concept be embraced by the Corps.
* To be the leading information navigator and supplier for the Corps of Engineers.
* To further develop a service-driven, customer-focused culture.
* To ensure a sound return on investment by increasing the productivity of users in their data-gathering efforts and reducing overall costs to the organization.
* To exist as a virtual service, using electronic media to allow information to be sought wherever it exists and used immediately by local or remote customers; to provide real-time information as a valuable competitive tool.
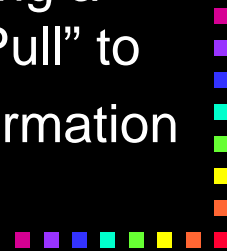
Proposed Strategy: USACE Library Program Strategic Management Plan Briefing
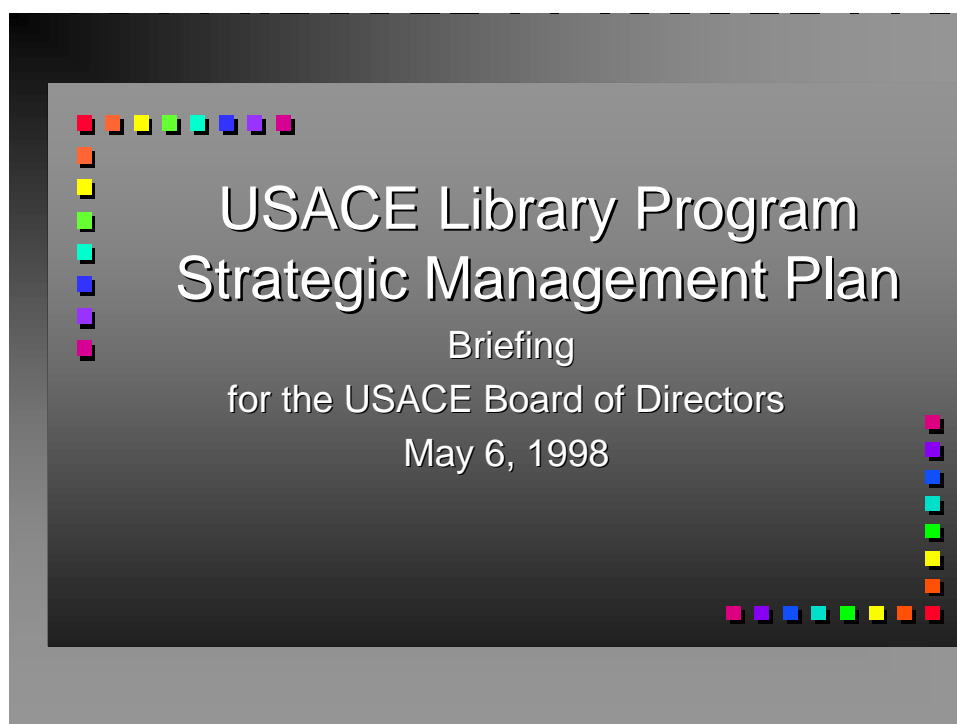
Introduction

- Libraries today are making a Paradigm Shift from a "Pull" to a "Push" concept of Information Service.

Forces Behind Paradigm Shift

External
- Advances in Technology
- Internet/Web Browsers
- Volume of Information Available
- Cost of Information

Internal
- Budget Cutbacks
- Manpower Decline
- Customers Expectations
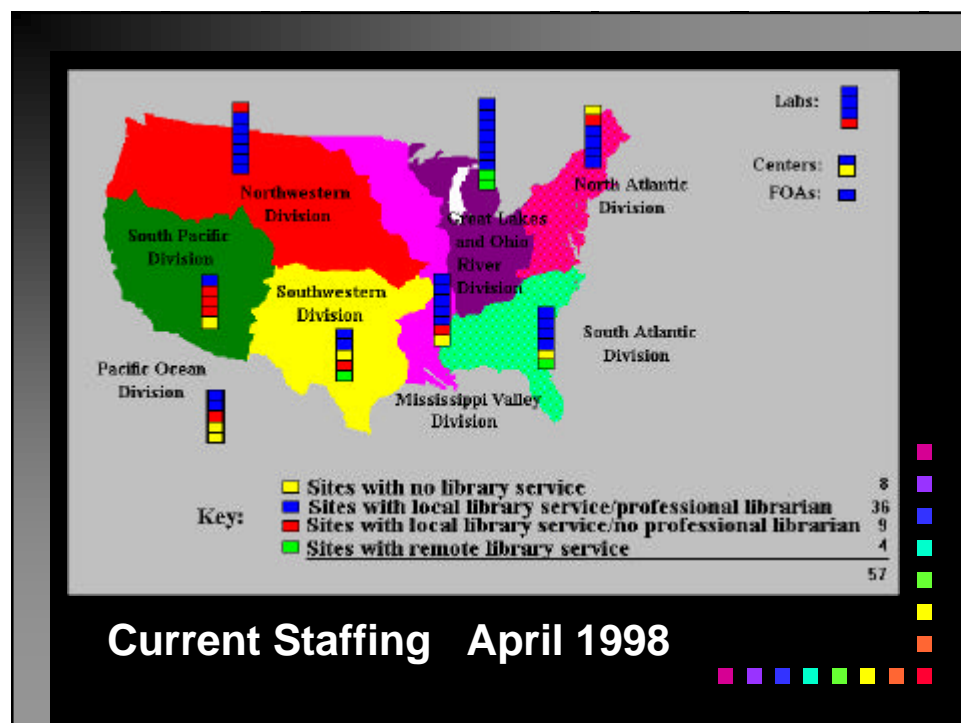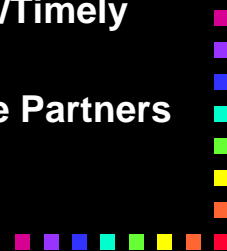- Desire to be more Responsive Organization
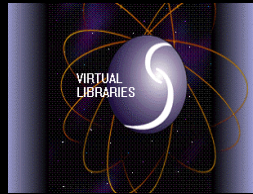
Current/Future Libraries

Current -- "Pull"
- Physical Collections
- Focus on Preservation
- Passive Respositories of Knowledge

Future -- "Push"
- Virtual Libraries
- Focus on Information Retrieval/Timely Delivery
- Proactive Partners

Current Staffing   April 1998

Virtual Library Concept

- Improve access to information -- extend library to desktop 24 hours/day 7days/week.
- Coordinate and standardize information resources across Corps.
- Use better business processes; e.g., volume discounts.
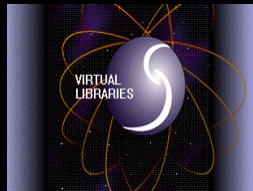
Corps Virtual Library Program
(Proposed)

- An Information Center for each Division with library staffing and collections.
- Librarian/Information Agent can remain in place at other sites -- will work in virtual environment.
- Centralized site for acquisitions and cataloging work.
- In addition to Regional Centers consolidate libraries located close together; i.e., WES and MVD/Vicksburg; HECSA and TEC.

Process Action Team (PAT)
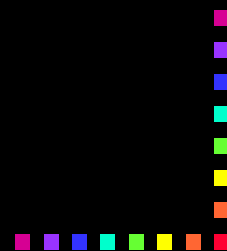## to Work With Virtual Team 4

- Examime options for Virtual Library implementation in the Corps.
- Survey customers.
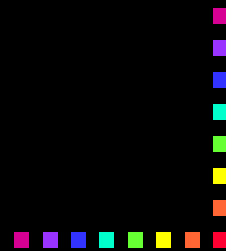- Estimate re-engineering and operational costs.
- Make recommendation.

Time Line

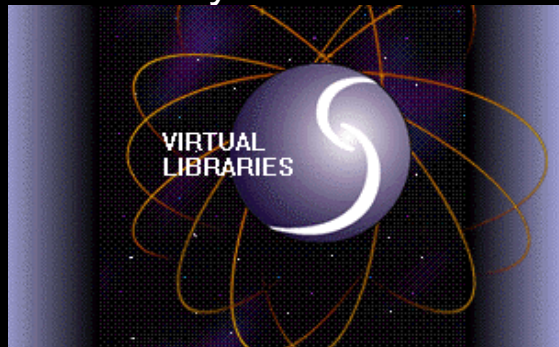| May 98	Jun-Aug 98	Sep 98	Sep 98-Jan 99	Feb 99
Initial Decision Brief	PAT Working	Final Decision Brief	Prototype	Adoption

Proposals for Measuring Success

- Metrics from Customer Survey
- Increase Information Access & Service
- Increase Cost Effectiveness
- Reduce Operating Costs

Virtual Library Action Plan Recap

VIRTUAL LIBRARIES

- PAT Evaluation
- Re-Engineering and Prototyping
- Measuring Success
- Resources Required/Timeline

Points of Contact

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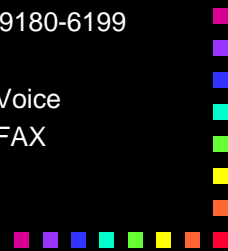Washington, DC 20314-1000

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Library Program Factoids

Staffing:
* All 80 librarians employed by the Corps, either government or contractor, must have a Master's degree in Library or Information Science.
* Program currently has one PhD candidate working on his dissertation.
* Library staff has over 900 years of corporate memory.
* Libraries have experienced a reduction of 40% in manpower over the last 10 years.
* Ratio of Library staff to engineers and scientists is currently 1 to 170.

Information Access:
* USACE libraries have access to more than 450 online databases and 100 million records in all areas of knowledge through the use of the DIALOG system.
* Membership in OCLC, provides our libraries with access to the world's largest library information network. This network provides access to 36 million records, more than 500 million location listings and represents 370 languages. This same network allows us access to the holdings of 26,000 libraries around the world.
* USACE libraries have access to the Internet and the vast amount of information available on the World Wide Web.
* Our own database of holdings, CELIO, has more than 547,000 items.

Services:
* In FY97, in serving our customers, the library staffs:
   +Conducted 37,760 online database searches.
   +Answered more than 79,000 reference questions.
   +Borrowed 9.166 items from other libraries.
   +Loaned 9,086 items to other libraries.
   +Ordered more than 19,000 items for our customers and our library collections.
   +Added more than 19,000 items to CELIO, our electronic database/electronic catalog.
   +Loaned 115,580 items from our collections to our customers
   +Maintained 11,843 journal subscriptions.
   +Sent 43,342 alert services to customers such as the Electronic Tables of Contents of Journals.
   +Spent less than $700 per engineer and scientist for these critical information services.
Industry average spending in 1993 was $1,700 per professional.

Facilities:
* 7 Corps sites that have no library service
* 4 Corps sites with remote library service
* 36 sites with local library service provided by a librarian
* 10 sites with local library service provided by a technician.
* Corps libraries currently occupy approximately 75,000 square feet of space. This varies at each Corps site from the smallest of 500 square feet at Rock Island to the largest at 10,000 square feet at WES.